

2001 WASHINGTON HEALTH LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Civic Engagement and Health System Change: The Power of People

Survey Results

About The Survey:

The Health Policy Analysis Program conducted an online opinion survey of those people who had registered for the 2001 Washington Health Legislative Conference by November 18. Since the survey was conducted via the Internet, only those registrants who had e-mail addresses were invited to participate. A total of 422 people were asked to participate during the survey period of November 19 - 29. A total of 276 people responded to the survey for a 65.4% response rate.

The purpose of the survey was to take the pulse of the health policy community regarding how they thought the system was performing, what the most pressing problems were, and how to address them. The Washington State Office of Financial Management had some input into the survey questions that related specifically to proposed strategies to help the uninsured population in Washington. These questions asked participants to rank various strategies first according to effectiveness and second by political viability. It's interesting to note that the strategies that ranked highest for effectiveness, (universal coverage, reforming the insurance market and broaden existing public insurance program), were not among the top three options selected for political viability (financial incentives for employers to purchase insurance, financial incentives for individuals to purchase insurance, and the development of new or expanded purchasing pools).

About the Survey Group:

The survey contained two questions intended to help us identify the make-up of the audience. These questions were, "What type of organization do you work for?" and "Which political party do you most closely identify yourself with?"

Here are the results.

Question 16: What type of organization do you work for?

Answer	Percentages
Government agency	24.28%
Health related product or service	16.30%
Health care provider	14.86%
University or research organization	10.87%
Advocacy/consumer group	6.88%
Elected official/staff member	5.07%
Professional/trade/labor org.	5.07%
Retired	3.62%
Student	2.90%
Other	10.14%

Question 17: Which political party do you most closely identify yourself with?

Answer	Percentages
Democrat	64.13%
None	18.48%
Republican	11.23%
Green	2.54%
Didn't response to question	1.81%
Libertarian	1.45%
Other	0.36%

What follows is a summary of the questions and responses from the survey. Responses to free-format comment questions are not included in this summary.

Status of Health System in Washington State

Q1: The health system in Washington State does a good job meeting the health needs of its citizens.

• Agree strongly	0.7%
• Agree	24.9%
• Disagree	46.9%
• Disagree strongly	8.4%
• Not sure	19.1%

Q2: Of the problems listed below, what is the **single most pressing problem** in the health system, in your opinion? (Top 5 responses)

• Social and economic health disparities	17.2%
• Low Medicare/Medicaid payment rates to providers	16.1%
• Pressure on the state budget to cut publicly covered populations	12.1%
• The state's uninsured population	11.7%
• Other	10.6%

Health System Change

Respondents believe that the following variables can have great impact on the problem selected in Q2:

• Government	65.6%
• Private/public partnership	39.6%
• Health care marketplace	26.4%
• Individuals	21.6%

Power of the People- Direct Legislation

- Q8: In general, voter approved initiatives reflect what most people want their government to do:
- Agree strongly 5.5%
 - Agree 29.3%
 - Disagree 37.0%
 - Disagree strongly 11.7%
 - Not sure 16.1%

Q9: The initiative process is a good way to set state policy:

- Agree strongly 1.8%
- Agree 5.9%
- Disagree 31.9%
- Disagree strongly 47.6%
- Not sure 12.5%

The “Public” in Public Policy

Q10: What should be the goal of public involvement activities?

- Educate public about trade-offs in setting health policy 78.8%
- Provide a way for decision makers to learn needs/desires of the electorate 62.6%
- Forge consensus about what should be done to improve the health system 49.5%

Q11: What types of civic engagement activities have you participated in during the last six months on your own personal time:

- Voted in an election 92.3%
- Donated time/effort to a civic or religious organization 70.3%
- Attended a public/community meeting 67.0%
- Written a letter/sent an e-mail/talked with an elected official 64.1%
- Donated money to a political cause 56.9%

Access to Health Insurance

Q12: In terms of improving access to health insurance, which reform proposals would be the most *effective*?

- Create program of universal coverage for catastrophic or preventive care 44.0%
- Reform the insurance market 16.1%
- Broaden existing public program eligibility and/or financing 12.8%

Q13: Which proposals would be the most *politically viable*?

- Provide new financial incentives for employers to help employees 22.7%

- Provide new financial incentives for individuals/families to purchase plans 18.7%
- Encourage development of new or maximize existing purchasing pools 18.0%

Q15: Which segments of the uninsured population should be targeted for help?

- All segments should be treated equally 34.1%
- Individuals working in low wage industries 30.1%
- Low income children 30.1%